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ABSTRACT

This publication is a distillation of the most salient, most often repeated observations and recommendations of Maryland teacher-test scorers on their experiences scoring student responses to the Maryland School Performance Assessment (MSPAP) test in 1994. Feedback is organized into perceptions about what would be pertinent to share with other teachers and actions or what a teacher-scorer anticipates doing in that classroom in the coming year based on the scoring experience. This year's edition also contains a new section, "Look How Far We've Come," in response to the increasing number of positive observations from teachers who are veterans of previous years' scoring projects. Comments are organized by grade level and content area (general, reading, writing/language use, mathematics, science, social studies) though many comments cross content areas and grade levels. (JB)

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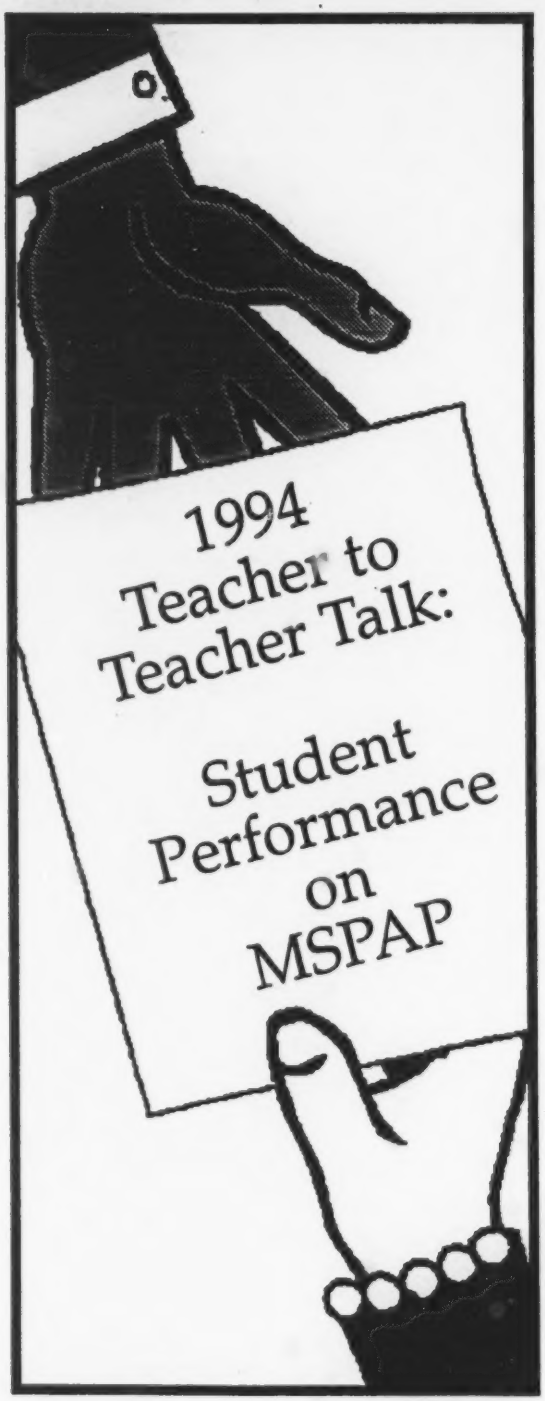

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INTRODUCTION

Once again, this past summer, several hundred teachers took the opportunity to share what they'd learned from their experience scoring student responses to the Maryland School Performance Assessment (MSPAP) tests. Specifically, they were asked the following questions:

1. On the basis of your experience scoring MSPAP, what are a few impressions that you would most like to share with other teachers about student performance?

2. Based on those impressions, what do you anticipate doing (or doing differently) in your classroom or school?

The *1994 Teacher to Teacher Talk* is a distillation of the most salient, most often repeated observations and recommendations from your colleagues around the state. Feedback has been organized into Perceptions (responses to Question #1) and Actions (responses to Question #2). This year's edition also contains a new section, called "Look How Far We've Come," in response to the increasing number of positive observations, particularly from teachers who are veterans of previous years' MSPAP scoring projects. They hope that these "bright notes" make clear that the impact on learning of performance-based instruction and of the Maryland Learning Outcomes is beginning to be evident. Sometimes, improvement can be masked by empirical data, since many students are not yet meeting the rigorous standards that are embodied in MSPAP. Yet the teachers who scored the tests observed that where students once left responses blank or gave no evidence of understanding, they are now often approaching proficiency!

Although comments within these pages are organized by grade level and content area, many comments cross content areas, so you may find it useful to read *1994 Teacher to Teacher Talk* in its entirety. You will note that each entry is followed by a grade level designated in parentheses. This identifies the grade level of the MSPAP responses that the teacher who provided that comment was scoring. However, the vast majority of comments are relevant to teachers across grade levels. The designation of NG means that the teacher failed to indicate the grade level team on which he or she served.

It is important to remember that the feedback in *1994 Teacher to Teacher Talk* reflects what teachers themselves chose to share with others. Not all of the Maryland Learning Outcomes are addressed in their observations, and some outcomes appear more heavily weighted than others. Similarly, many observations address fairly basic skills rather than more complex thinking. There is much more to MSPAP, therefore, and to the goals we are attempting to reach by the year 2000, than is represented here, therefore. Nevertheless, along with other sources of information available to you from local and state sources, we hope that *1994 Teacher to Teacher Talk* is a useful tool to improve teaching and learning in Maryland.

Gail Lynn Goldberg
Specialist in Test Development and MSPAP Scoring Lead
Office of Planning, Results, and Information Management

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Elva Marie Bowens
MSPAP Specialist
Caroline County Public Schools

Geneva Cannon
Supervisor of Instruction
Worcester County Board of Education

Lynn Gensor
Writing Resource Teacher
Calvert County Public Schools

Debbie George
MSPAP Specialist
Caroline County Public Schools

Nelson Palmer
Mathematics Curriculum Specialist K-5
Frederick County Public Schools

Sherry Purkey
Supervisor of Middle School Humanities
Washington County Public Schools

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LOOK HOW FAR WE'VE COME!

- *Students have improved in writing by giving examples to support ideas.* (NG)
- *Students showed strong skills in recognizing and completing patterns and making predictions. Students were able to support their responses with examples.* (NG)
- *Most of the time, students are answering in complete sentences when it's appropriate or advisable to do so.* (NG)
- *Many students did a good job with proportions in solving problems.* (NG)
- *In my two years of scoring I have seen great improvements in the children's writing skills and their ability to answer more questions with less frustration.* (NG)
- *Finding area - most seemed to do well on this.* (NG)
- *They have done very well on writing "to persuade."* (Grade 3)
- *Students generally seem to be able to interpret and read data from charts.* (Grade 3)
- *Students are able to pull some information from a reading passage and list or discuss what they have read.* (Grade 3)
- *They did a good job overall of interpreting information from tables.* (Grade 3)
- *Letter writing was generally in good letter form.* (Grade 3)
- *I was impressed with topics chosen because they generated a lot of interest.* (Grade 3)
- *Students did well identifying and completing patterns.* (Grade 3)
- *Students generally seem to be able to give the total in addition and have improved in problem-solving in math. Students appear to understand the relationship between changes in conditions and differences in thermometer readings.* (Grade 3)
- *Students did much better this year in attempting to answer questions, even if it was apparent that they did not know the answers.* (Grade 3)

- *They appear to be very comfortable with the integration of all the subject areas.* (Grade 3)
- *Students are able to pull some information from a reading passage and list or discuss what they have read.* (Grade 3)
- *Students respond very well (in writing) when conveying the results of hands-on science experiments.* (Grade 3)
- *Organizing information and then communicating an answer has definitely not been a problem.* (Grade 3)
- *Children were able to apply math concepts to tasks better than last year.* (Grade 3)
- *Responses to the graph activities were encouraging. Often children who struggled on other parts of the test seemed to do better in this area.* (Grade 3)
- *Overall, during the four years I've been grading MSPAP, I have seen a steady improvement in the quality of responses that students are giving to the tests. Somebody's doing something right! Thanks to all you hard working teachers!* (Grade 5)
- *Last year many times students did not start the sentence with capitals or end sentences with periods. This year the '94 tests really showed an improvement in language usage.* (Grade 5)
- *Students are using more complex sentences. Students are becoming more comfortable with Writing to Inform.* (Grade 5)
- *Students in Maryland must be understanding the writing process. It looks like peer response is having some effect on how they revise.* (Grade 5)
- *Not as many blanks ... students more often recognize key cue words in activities and build that language into their responses. Wider use of "risk-taking" words (words that may be harder to spell but which provide more specific, evocative language use in the text). There's more use of compound sentences.* (Grade 5)
- *Students are using the language of activities as sentence starters. Yea! Some students wrote FAT-P (form-audience-topic-purpose: an organization and development strategy during pre-writing) on the test booklet. These students seemed to have good, organized paragraphs and essays. Students like to take a stand on a topic.* (Grade 5)

- *Students are using the prompt to begin sentences and thereby putting the "audience in the 'A'." Students are using compound sentences well.* (Grade 5)

- *Students are doing well on responding to prompts; they know how to use the question to formulate an answer.* (Grade 5)

- *Students put a lot more thought into their explanations. Students appear more familiar than in past years with some of the higher level thinking skills, such as predictions, conclusions, and inferences.* (Grade 5)

- *Students are showing improvement in stating their point of view on topics.* (Grade 5)

- *Areas of strength: Creative thinking, making predictions, detecting and continuing patterns.* (Grade 5)

- *The 5th graders are doing well with graphs. They only forget the title of the graph.* (Grade 5)

- *Students did very well comparing/contrasting graphs.* (Grade 5)

- *Compared with last year, it seems that students worked much better and used more complete and complex sentences.* (Grade 5)

- *Children seemed to enjoy most illustrating their findings in the science experiments.* (Grade 5)

- *Since this is my 3rd year scoring MSPAP, I am able to see the progress in task development as well as in student scores. The impression I have been left with is that a chance to be creative is exciting, a request for opinion builds self value and importance, and a request to instruct others emphasizes self worth and the individual's role in society.....Also, this year, I can clearly see an improvement in instruction (by teachers). Students are truly making progress expressing thoughts via sentence order, style, tone, and correctness. Students are also showing development in reasoning and thinking skills. This is evident in the content of responses.* (Grade 5)

- *There are more students persisting at completing the tasks this year. Students are more often supporting their answers.* (Grade 8)

- *Students were successful in identifying main ideas from reading passages, summarizing the main points of a reading, and formulating their own questions from a reading.* (Grade 8)

- *I was very surprised to note how well-organized the persuasive essays are. Some of the students are very thorough with their reasoning.* (Grade 8)

- *Some things students are doing well on: writing sentence-length answers to questions, showing work (computation), using formulas correctly, attempting difficult problems.* (Grade 8)

- *Students generally comprehend what they are reading and are able to list general ideas about the articles.* (Grade 8)

- *Students were successful in identifying main ideas from reading passages, summarizing the main points of a reading, and formulating their own questions from a reading.* (Grade 8)

- *Fewer blank books - kids are at least trying.* (Grade 8)

- *More students responded to tasks and stayed on topic.* (Grade 8)

- *Students seemed to do well on the questions where they were being asked to express their own ideas, as opposed to questions asking for more concrete and historical information. They effectively used graphic organizers.* (Grade 8)

- *Students were also doing well with questions concerning charts and diagrams. Most students showed that they could pull information from a diagram and use it correctly.* (Grade 8)

- *Generally students are expressing themselves in a creative way better than in years past.* (Grade 8)

- *Over the past three years of scoring MSPAP, I have noticed a few changes in how students react and respond to taking the test. Overall, in attitude, students are less resistant to the idea of this week-long test. This has been evident in the smaller number of completely blank or unscorable books. Also, the quality of student responses this year was generally superior to the past two years I've scored tests.* (Grade 8)

- *Teachers have made terrific progress in training students to answer questions more completely. The biggest improvement I've noticed is the use of complete sentences that address the question in the response and make an attempt to answer it. Students clearly have been directed to read the whole question before answering it. Fewer students are answering questions incorrectly due to having not read the whole question.* (Grade 8)

Perceptions

GENERAL

Note: The following comments are not discipline specific, even though they were based on teachers' experiences scoring tasks in particular content areas. Some comments relate to students' test-taking behaviors, some relate to skills, processes, and abilities that go across disciplines, and others reflect integrative thinking and learning.

- *Students need to explain answers more fully rather than just implying what they mean and why. Students have difficulty pulling information from two sources. Students may need prior instruction in working on tasks within time blocks in order to perform more efficiently on test.* (NG)

- *Kids tend to write more overall but many still are not answering the questions asked.* (NG)

- *Students need to support their opinions with facts - to try to explain reasons why.* (NG)

- *Students' explanations are not completed. They have to be specific in their answers. Many of the answers are vague.* (NG)

- *Some students have trouble expressing themselves clearly and concisely.* (NG)

- *Some attention needs to be given to choosing the most effective graph for the information given.* (NG)

- *Need more experience reading longer questions and help in identifying "key words" (list, explain, etc.)* (NG)

- *Students need experience in compiling information from two sources and then synthesizing and applying it. Students need to respond to questions in more detail with more appropriate vocabulary. Recognize words that imply more than one (e.g., ways, several, things). Give students the opportunity to work on tasks in a timed setting.* (NG)

- *I think it is important to use every opportunity to allow students to articulate responses in writing. The MSPAP format can be incorporated in every subject matter. The more familiar students are with the format, the better they will perform. "Cause and effect" reasoning is also something else the students need practice on.* (NG)

- *The children really seemed to enjoy and learn more from the "hands on" experiments. This shows that even at the third grade level concrete, manipulative examples are a must."* (Grade 3)

- *Students had difficulty explaining how they got an answer. They often stated that they "followed the directions" or "just knew," which were not acceptable responses.* (Grade 3)

- *Help children to manage time for answering questions.* (Grade 3)

- *The students have difficulty following more than one written direction in a task.* (Grade 3)

- *Children do not seem to understand the terms "advantages and disadvantages." We need continued emphasis on teaching children to write comparisons. We need to stress reading directions more carefully and locating clue words - ex: "Explain, list, describe..." so they know <u>what</u> the question is asking.* (Grade 3)

- *Children do fairly well listing...but do not explain answers. Children need practice writing comparisons.* (Grade 3)

- *Students had difficulty demonstrating an understanding of the difference between explaining and describing.* (Grade 3)

- *Students have been able to read and respond using the given information quite well; however, although they apply the information in their answers, their responses are often to short or mechanically incorrect.* (Grade 3)

- *Work on extended sentences with extension words such as "because," "but," "so," and "and." Children can use some words from the directions in their answers. Children should write their <u>own</u> story, poem, or play and not retell a familiar story, poem or play....Even as early as third grade many children use too many unnecessary words and get so caught up in filling the space that their answers make no sense at all.* (Grade 3)

- *Children have difficulty comparing more than two objects. Some children did a great job of highlighting key words and phrases in questions. Those who highlighted more often stayed on topic. Expose children to longer questions with multiple tasks.* (Grade 3)

- *Areas of Concern: Children's' understanding of the words "advantages," "disadvantages," "explain," "capital/human resources," and "affected." Students need more assistance with the concept "comparison."* (Grade 3)

- *Students need to have experience completing multi-step tasks in which they must refer back and forth, and use previous steps to complete new ones.* (Grade 3)

- *Instruction needs to be more performance/outcome based. Teachers need to continue to instruct through the use of multi-step activities...Students know how to get the answer but do not know how to express how or why they came up with that answer. Students need to be taught how to explain their answer.* (Grade 3)

- *Children need experience reading and answering questions independently.* (Grade 3)

- *Students need to read the whole questions. Students should proofread and ask "Does my answer make sense?" Students need to be able to justify their answers using information already presented in the problem. Students struggled to give detailed answers.* (Grade 3)

- *"Explain" and "support" need to be understood.* (Grade 3)

- *Students still need to be able to read, comprehend and follow directions. Students need to improve on their skills at referring back to the text to complete or develop their responses.* (Grade 3)

- *The students seemed to write enthusiastically about topics related to experiments and/or hands on activities. They had much difficulty writing about abstract concepts. Students failed to elaborate when it was obviously necessary on some writing tasks.* (Grade 5)

- *Many students are beginning to demonstrate a better ability to follow sequential directions. However, this still needs work.* (Grade 5)

- *In writing answers, when students needed to supply more than one reason or example, many times they did not.* (Grade 5)

- *Students seem to write better when they think it is a "writing only" task. They do not do as well, for example, on integrating writing with social studies or science answers.* (Grade 5)

- *Students should be encouraged to answer all questions, not just the ones they were comfortable answering.* (Grade 5)

- *A large number of students do not read the test questions thoroughly; this results in answers that only meet half of the given criteria. Students also need to work on explaining themselves clearly. When writing a letter to someone, the student implies that the person understands the purpose of the letter. Many answers and conclusions are too short and vague, usually missing the main point.* (Grade 5)

- *Students also seem to be overwhelmed when asked to paraphrase a text - it is too often simply copied verbatim. Main ideas are not highlighted, and very few students seem to be able to give information in a logical way.* (Grade 5)

- *Students need to order ideas purposefully.* (Grade 5)

- *Students need to be better able to: always supply a rationale when asked - answer the "why?" Write about how they feel and be specific in answering "why?" Answer questions in their own words - not just copy from text. Use main idea table with a story. Give specific information from text. Compare selections that are written about the same topic - determine which selection would best fit purpose - be specific - state why you would use that one to write a report, etc.* (Grade 5)

- *Another important concept - or skill - to practice is logical reasoning. Students should be able to choose whatever is the best solution to a problem and then justify their choice - logically!* (Grade 5)

- *One facet of the testing that some students have a problem handling successfully is shifting their focus from one aspect of an activity to the next aspect of activity. This results in their writing responses that fit the previous activity but not the one which they are actually doing. In some cases, they will use the original concept throughout a task even though the later parts of the task have moved on to a much different concept....The problem could be caused by several factors: (1) They do not understand the ideas being used; (2) They have not really read the instructions carefully and thoroughly; (3) They are not accustomed to having to make "shifts" - slight or major - in their thinking....All of these strategies can be emphasized in class without great modifications in content or instruction. One thing that needs to be done—have students analyze the requirements of classroom activities with the teacher and with each other.* (Grade 5)

- *The children do not seem to be reading the directions completely. It was apparent in many responses that there was comprehension but that the child skipped a word.* (Grade 5)

- *I have also been made aware of the importance of the word "explain." Many students seem to simply reiterate rather than take the time to give an explanation in detail.* (Grade 5)

- *Students are not giving answers which are specific to the question asked.* (Grade 5)

- *On the basis of my experience scoring 3rd grade and 5th grade social studies, math, and reading, I would like to suggest that Maryland teachers provide many opportunities for their students to express opinions supported by facts (documentation). These facts (this documentation) can be drawn from a variety of sources such as texts, graphs, newspapers, magazines, experts' opinions, television, radios, and even on-line computer sources. Finding sources to support what a child thinks is not difficult; it just seemingly has not been done a lot. Children overall are capable of processing information and synthesizing it to produce a logical conclusion. Whether we as teachers agree with their opinions remains unimportant; however, it is important that these young minds begin to express more than a parroting of unsubstantiated gibberish. Hense, "What do you think...?" (recommend, choose, etc.) should be followed by "and on what do you base that opinion?" As this type of practice is continued, the student's vocabulary will increase beyond the "I like", "I think", "It is good because...", It is nice because...", "My mother said..." to include statements that reflect analysis such as "Based on what I've read...", "Current data indicates..." or This graph shows..." (for example). As our students are encouraged and given opportunities to make choices, to make decisions and to support their opinions, we will see a more enlightened population reflected on MSPAP testing.* (Grade 5)

- *Areas of strength: Creative thinking, making predictions, detecting and continuing patterns.*

- *Areas of difficulty: Many students had a hard time focusing on the important parts of a question. They need more practice in highlighting areas to focus on when answering a question.* (Grade 5)

- *Students are attempting to answer more questions than I expected. However, some students write long answers and say nothing related to the question asked.* (Grade 5)

- *Students were writing in complete sentences more than last year. Students seem very weak when asked to explain why they choose a certain answer.* (Grade 5)

- *I have found that students seem to be more successful with reading and answering questions pertaining to the reading. Students seemed to have much more difficulty in performing experiments, drawing conclusions, and making predictions from the experiment.* (Grade 8)

- *The students are having problems with critical thinking skills, especially the ability to look at things and explain them objectively. Students tend to answer questions with their own opinions, without supporting or developing them.* (Grade 8)

- *Students are not writing complete responses to questions. They understand the general concept, but are not expressing themselves clearly.* (Grade 8)

- *Students need to work on developing ideas instead of naming them without expansion.* (Grade 8)

- *Students need to be aware of the value of this test — also of its aims and purposes.* (Grade 8)

- *In general, students also had difficulty with critical thinking skills. Students had difficulty with evaluation type questions (e.g., which one do you think will be most successful?) and inferential questions.* (Grade 8)

- *Students are simply not reading carefully. Many do not follow directions.* (Grade 8)

- *Students seemed to do well on the questions where they were being asked to express their own ideas, as opposed to questions asking for more concrete and historical information. The graphic organizer proved effective. However, students are not always able to separate their feelings from the facts they are given.* (Grade 8)

- *Students need to check, proofread, work to see if the answer makes sense; support recommendations with findings; explain in detail, build conclusions based on facts and predictions based on what came before.* (Grade 8)

- *Students need to use available dictionaries to define unknown words. Too many answers reflected a lack of understanding. Don't fill up the lines just to do so. Be exacting in answers. Highlight all the verbs in each set of directions to insure that student answer is as complete as possible. Too many students gave partial answers. Make no "assumptive" answers. Be thorough.* (Grade 8)

- *Making tables is generally misunderstood.* (Grade 8)

- *For this type of test, analysis, synthesis, and application are the skills that are most needed. The questions on this test seemed to be designed for students to use information from the Resource Book combined with prior knowledge. They must analyze and synthesize information and then apply it to a problem. Some students can perform this operation well to varying degrees; but is clear that students need a great deal more work at the process as evidenced by the general quality of answers on this test. One definite instructional area to be attended to is using the higher-order processes such as analysis, synthesis, application and evaluation.* (Grade 8)

- *The students need to proofread their work far more carefully. Missing words often robbed otherwise articulate children of the points they deserved.* (Grade 8)

- *Help students feel accountable for their test performance - encourage "best efforts" to benefit school, system, curriculum development or whatever - Do not say "it doesn't count"! Students need to learn how to defend their answers - even math calculations must be explained in full by the student for the math answer to be given full credit - not just "I used the formula" - show the formula!* (Grade 8)

READING

- *Children need to practice picking out one major event from a reading,writing about it and elaborating.* (Grade 3)

- *When responding to complex texts, students aren't answering with specific information from the texts. When asked to relate two or more different texts, students are often only discussing one reading (very few are using information from both tests.) The students seem to elaborate more on the questions that require pictures than on activities with just writing segments.* (Grade 3)

- *When reading for literary experience: What students do well - write summaries; What students have difficulty with - using details from text to support predictions, extracting details from beginning, middle and end of selections, telling how illustrations did/did not help you understand story , using details to support answer, comparing/contrasting one's own view to author's view, reading critically, telling main idea and using text to support, using details from text to support one's own views.* (Grade 3)

- *Teachers should demonstrate the difference between a general and specific answer. (Practice on pulling details from a story using specific examples). Clarify words "illustrator," "author," "editions," "character in a story."* (Grade 3)

- *Students had a hard time comparing themselves with story characters. Many students gave very good summaries of stories. Their ability to read and understand poetry was not very strong.* (Grade 3)

- *Students are correctly using picture clues.... They are applying what they read to their own lives. Students need to interpret poetry. They need to read between the lines, determining the author's purpose. Students need to be able to support statements with story facts.* (Grade 3)

- *Many students do not do well responding to questions structured to elicit critical and interpretive responses. Students did especially poorly on a question where they had to compare two works of literature for their thematic content. On the other hand, most students are doing quite well in responding to questions based on global and personal reading stances....Students do seem to have good reader strategies and familiarity with graphic organizers.* (Grade 5)

- *Student having difficulty finding and fully explaining differences - they often state one part of the "difference" but fail to complete their ideas.* (Grade 5)

- *The meaning of the word "setting" and how it may or may not influence the characters of the story needs to be taught or re-emphasized.* (Grade 8)

- *Kids enjoyed interpreting poems. The short story selections clearly involved <u>many</u> reading levels and difficulty depending on the student's choice.* (Grade 8)

- *Students generally comprehend what they are reading and are able to list general ideas about the articles. Students have problems drawing inferences and applying previous given information to later questions.* (Grade 8)

- *Students are not reading the questions thoroughly - writing from "the hip" not "the brain."* (Grade 8)

- *Students are not answering questions asked, not answering all parts of question, and not sticking to facts (offering opinions on the issue instead of answers to questions). They were not able to do three-part questions.* (Grade 8)

- *Students did not know how to compare two articles on the same topic. They generally wrote about one article only. Students need to learn that when a question asks for reasons, you need to give more than one.* (Grade 8)

- *Students should be instructed to read the questions carefully twice. Many are not answering the questions but rather what they "think" the questions are. They need real discipline in this area. Sloppy reading leads to sloppy responses. Students should practice underlining the key parts of questions so that they do not fail to address them in their answers.* (Grade 8)

- *Students must be able to summarize an article and read for specific details.* (Grade 8)

- *Students need work on reading two or more different passages on a topic and making connections between them. Supporting answers with explicit information from text. Students need work on reading and following directions independently. Students need work using a dictionary or thesaurus when vocabulary is unknown.* (Grade 8)

WRITING/LANGUAGE IN USE

- *Overall, students need more practice in punctuation, writing, editing and peer editing, how to convey ideas with style and tone.* (NG)

- *Many run-on sentences in answers. A LOT is TWO WORDS! Almost all responses used "alot" not "a lot". Exposure to and experience with writing lengthier poems needed. This is because although pieces are not scored for length, an overly brief poem does not give the student an opportunity to demonstrate his or her ability to use language creatively and purposefully. Need more writing of lab reports based on science activities. Need writing in math - "How did you solve the problem?" Very good with friendly letter form and business letter form.* (NG)

- *Remind students of the meanings of the LU icon; it means the response will be "scored" for Language in Use as well as for the particular content area being measured in that activity.* (NG)

- *Students need to avoid words like "stuff" or "things," in answers.* (NG)

- *Students need to support their opinions with facts - try to explain reasons why.* (NG)

- *Kids are doing better on long tasks that they have plenty of time to develop. Persuasion is not the same thing as begging. Students need experience in compiling information from two sources and then synthesizing and applying it. Students need to respond to questions in more detail with more appropriate vocabulary.* (NG)

- *When writing to an individual they are familiar with, their response is clearer, more content based, and grammatically correct.* (Grade 3)

- *Sometimes, responses would be beautifully handwritten with error-free spelling and million dollar vocabulary words but you wouldn't find a period until after the last word on the page.* (Grade 3)

- *Children still have difficulty writing comparisons.* (Grade 3)

- *Children should know how to spell and use appropriately homonyms like "there," "their," "where," "were," "our," "are," "to," "two," "by," "buy," "no," "know."* (Grade 3)

- *Children should be told that printing is acceptable on the test. Stress to children that they should write something! They should work on editing skills year round - peer checkers and especially self checks.* (Grade 3)

- *Students need instruction and modeling in writing a complete, well developed story, including beginning, middle and end. Instruction is also needed in showing students ways to expand sentences and elaborate ideas. Students need to understand that while poetry does not necessarily need to rhyme, it must be seen as a unified whole and have some sense of rhythm and movement. Students continue to need work in editing written work for completeness of ideas as well as mechanics!* (Grade 3)

- *Students need to work on capitalization—many students over-capitalize.* (Grade 3)

- *Many children would write a perfect sentence and just forget the period. Please continue to encourage proofreading. Verb tense also seemed to give quite a few students trouble* (Grade 3)

- *When writing a story keep elapsed time to a short period; it allows for more control in the story. Children should be able to write 2-3 tight compound sentences.* (Grade 3)

- *Students could benefit from more opportunities to analyze given responses for reasonableness.* (Grade 3)

- *Students seemed to write more to inform than persuade and did not include information suggested to be included.* (Grade 5)

- *Students need more practice with verb tense and appropriate use.* (Grade 5)

- *Please go over what persuasive writing is. It's not begging. Write to persuade not write to beg.* (Grade 5)

- *Last year many times students did not start the sentence with capitals or end sentences with periods. This year the '94 tests really showed an improvement in this aspect of language usage.* (Grade 5)

- *Many errors in LU consisted of run-on-sentences. Many students had excellent answers but left off periods.* (Grade 5)

- *Clarify that persuasion does not mean a lot of "pleases."* (Grade 5)

- *Students are still writing in run-on sentences and beginning sentences with "that," "because," and "so." Students need to learn to use extensions, expand and give details. Students need to work on proofreading their answers that are scored for LU.* (Grade 5)

- *We need to stress correct usages of homonyms like to, two, and too; they're there, and their; and were and we're, etc. The icons need to be stressed to students because so many students do poorly on the shorter answers because they do not pay as much detail to mechanics. Students need to write more! Often what they have is adequate, but it's not enough to score. Students need to stop writing, "I don't know," and stop drawing questions marks. This is a zero.* (Grade 5)

- *Final period in paragraph are often forgotten, even by the best students.* (Grade 5)

- *Teach students what the Writing/LU icons mean. It will help them when they take the test! Students are creative in their writing even when given the constraints of a prompt. For example, responses in which students assumed another point of view or voice were a nice change! Also, it looks like peer editing is having some effect on how they revise.* (Grade 5)

- *More attention needs to be focused on having students write for personal expression.* (Grade 5)

- *Students need to use the prompt to get spelling of key words. Poems and stories both tend to lack development and vivid language. Poetry, in particular, is quite mediocre.* (Grade 5)

- *Students have problems in developing ideas into a well-developed whole, especially in poetry.* (Grade 5)

- *Students need to reread their written work on a regular basis. The tests showed <u>very little</u> self-correction by students who were obviously capable.* (Grade 5)

- *Our students need more instruction on: writing persuasively, knowing the difference between extensions and elaboration and writing irrelevant and off-topic information; how to form superlatives or comparatives.* (Grade 5)

- *I see general overall improvement in the written responses of the students. They still need more instruction and practice in writing explanations and descriptions.* (Grade 5)

- *Many students don't know the expression "could have" or "would have". They write "could of" and "would of." Students begin many sentences with "and, but and or." Students tend to do well on tasks that ask for their own personal input (i.e., opinions, persuasion).* (Grade 8)

- *Students are better writers when they attain information from hands-on experiences. Too many students' "summaries" result in boring regurgitation. Students need more practice in paraphrasing. I was very surprised to note how well-organized the persuasive essays are. Some of the students are very thorough with their reasoning.* (Grade 8)

- *From what I have seen, the students generally have poor punctuation skills and also poor spelling. They rarely put periods at the ends of their sentences and commas are almost never used. Students seem to not know the difference between summarizing in their own words and copying. Students need to work on using quotes and properly introducing them.* (Grade 8)

- *Many, many students use language well when they are comfortable with what they want to say. When the going gets tough, though (for example, when the content of a task seems difficult), most students begin to make errors. Many Maryland 8th graders still do not know how and when to use a question mark. There is a broad band of students with almost adequate language use skills whose writing would be much improved if they would just capitalize the first word of each sentence, refrain from random capitalization within sentences, and put a period at the end of each sentence.* (Grade 8)

- *Students, no matter how their work fares elsewhere, are doing an excellent job on the persuasive essay! Students didn't show any interest in summarizing—most answers were copied right from the text. Instructors should focus on sentence structure.* (Grade 8)

- *Emphasize the need to eliminate "run-on sentences"!* (Grade 8)

MATHEMATICS

- *Students need more emphasis on graphing, probability, and mathematics involving estimation and rounding. Teachers should also stress the importance of using dollar signs and decimal points.* (NG)

- *Practice rounding with division problems.* (NG)

- *The students do not always ask themselves if their math answers make sense.* (NG)

- *Students are remiss in their thinking skills. Students need to be able to make judgements and draw conclusions based on student or test generated information. Students also have a great problem in following directions and providing information that has been specifically asked for.* (NG)

- *Encourage children to use the terms "add" or "multiply" not "plus" or "times" (example: "You 'plus' the number and then 'times' it")* (NG)

- *Students sometimes had difficulty with creating facial glyphs from data chart, explaining answers, and collecting, organizing, and displaying data. Students at all grade levels (beginning with grade 1) need opportunities to experience the thinking, problem solving process presented in a multi-step format on a regular basis.* (Grade 3)

- *Students need more practice in identifying multiple lines of symmetry. Students need more practice in making estimations. They confuse the process and round after they calculate.* (Grade 3)

- *Students have trouble identifying line of symmetry or verbally describing patterns.* (Grade 3)

- *Students in grade 3 are not demonstrating a mastery of fractions. Students in grade 3 are not demonstrating the ability to explain a number sentence or communicate mathematically the relationship between a number sentence and the situation it models.* (Grade 3)

- *Be sure children understand the difference between perimeter and area.* (Grade 3)

- *Students had difficulty determining congruency and describing congruent figures.* (Grade 3)

- *Students can make repeating patterns, but have difficulty describing them. They use adjectives instead of stating a pattern (ABAB). Students were very good at measuring. Students have difficulty completing 2- and 3-step problems. Many students still think an estimate is a "guess."* (Grade 3)

- *We must teach children to EXPLAIN their answers. Many children give correct answers but receive no credit because they do not explain their answers. Children need to become familiar with answering 2 or 3 step questions.* (Grade 3)

- *Greater focus on 3-d geometric shapes and attributes is needed across all schools. More math journals to practice explaining mathematical concepts. Children were able to apply math concepts to tasks better than last year.* (Grade 3)

- *Responses to the graph activities were encouraging. Often, children who struggled on other parts of the test seemed to do better in this area. Students should work on how to translate graph-info to written text. If a graph shows "5 people recycle" that doesn't mean "Everyone loves to save the earth."* (Grade 3)

- *Strengths - recording data, improved logical reasoning.*

- *Weaknesses - specificity in answers, reading and interpreting charts, using data to support answers, following all of the directions, fractions (math), number sentence meaning.* (Grade 3)

- *Teach symmetry.* (Grade 3)

- *An area of real trouble seemed to be in measurement. Many children mistook radius for diameter, used inches instead of centimeters, and labeled measurements incorrectly.* (Grade 5)

- *The importance of using a compass to accurately construct circles, and rulers with careful measurement should be practiced. Also, students are failing to label all sides of a geometric figure with measurements.* (Grade 5)

- *Students need to be able to: explain a mathematical procedure in words; describe geometric figures' characteristics (a parallelogram is not a slanted square); define congruency; draw a detailed diagram and label all of its parts appropriately; include appropriate unit (metric) when recording results; include all information when completing a chart; locate information on a chart and generalize the information to answer questions.* (Grade 5)

- *Students are improving, but there are some areas that we need to continue to work on: (1) Use of a protractor, (2) understanding congruency, (3) geometric shapes, (4) mathematical patterns, (5) understanding and completing charts, (6) following directions, (7) measurement skills (metric and customary units), (8) compare/contrast skills, (9) working in groups, (10) making predictions.* (Grade 5)

- *Work on stem and leaf plot.* (Grade 5)

- *Students are not demonstrating knowledge that a pattern needs evidence throughout all data. They tend to give only one item to prove mathematical relationship in a pattern. Students do not seem to be familiar with the components of a table or chart, especially the title. Very few students label both axes or give the table/chart a title. When conducting investigations, more emphasis is needed on validity/reliability. Students need to know why it is important to compare data.* (Grade 5)

- *Multi-step math problems - many could not do. Could not function within a budget. Difficulty using measurement and making geometric shapes according to precise directions. Use of compass needs to improve. Need to emphasize to students to give details in summaries from data or budget. Not used to buying several items for varying amounts within budget. Graphing skills - many forget to label everything or forget title of graph. Many have difficulty writing summaries explaining what they learned. Many have difficulty answering "how"? They give you "what" when you are looking for how. Some cannot read graph and/or draw conclusions from that data. Students need to learn to justify and support their answers/ conclusions with specific facts/data. Students need to understand terminology "justify" "support" "conclusions" "investigate"... They have trouble drawing conclusions from data on charts.* (Grade 5)

- *Many students rounded numbers when exact numbers were called for (rounded to the nearest dollar). Students need to be more precise in measuring. Many students had the "magic ruler syndrome." They would use their ruler to make a straight line, but would label the figure incorrectly, as though just using the ruler made the sides the correct length.* (Grade 5)

- *Students do not understand how to calculate the area of irregular shapes.* (Grade 5)

- *It is obvious that students had experience with perimeter, but not enough with area. They also need activities that help them to more clearly understand the difference between the two. Perhaps instructional goals should emphasize more that students have more practice verbalizing concepts that are taught.* (Grade 5)

- *The 5th graders are doing well with graphs. They only forget the title of the graph. Fifth graders need practice measuring items - using practical examples - "Will the table cloth cover the table?"* (Grade 5)

- *Need to do more work on children writing a number sentence vs. an explanation.* (Grade 5)

- *Teachers should remind students that this is not a test of artistic ability!! Drawings are used to convey ideas, not to express personal feelings.* (Grade 5)

- *Students seem to be doing very poorly on writing number sentences. They are writing actual sentences instead of number sentences. Teachers need to work on probability more. Less than half of the students, have been successful on the probability questions.* (Grade 5)

- *Using correct terminology to explain the characteristics of geometric figures - sides, not lines, (opposite sides, use all sides). Stress the importance of accurate terminology.* (Grade 5)

- *Students need to know which type of graph is best when given different types of data i.e., when it is best to use bar, line, or circle. Students need to be familiar with all of the functions on a non-scientific calculator, whether they understand the formulas or not. Students must know how to substantiate numbers into the formulas and evaluate.* (Grade 8)

- *Students are not checking the reasonableness of their answers. For math tasks if they use a calculator they assume that their answer must be correct. Students are not choosing appropriate types of graphs.* (Grade 8)

- *Many students had problems with vocabulary words such as "variables," "illustration," "validate," "experience," and "elements."* (Grade 8)

- *Students need to attend to proper graphing skills, including appropriate title, proper placement of variables, consistent scale sequencing, unit labeling.* (Grade 8)

- *If the test refers to specific factors for basing a decision, students should refer to these factors in their responses.* (Grade 8)

- *Students do well - ordered pairs on graph. Students do poorly - graphing, record angle of deflection, Pythagorean theorem, rounding answers, supporting statements with evidence, determining probability with a number cube, basic computations.* (Grade 8)

- *Graphing activities - students quite often reversed the coordinates, plotting y-coordinates on the x-axis and x-coordinates on the y-axis. Many students experienced difficulty calculating properly (order of operations) with equations where values were entered based on a given formula. Many students had no idea of how to set up and complete a table.* (Grade 8)

- *Students have trouble rounding amounts to nearest penny. Students often do not recognize unreasonable answers i.e., when finding prices. There is a lack of comprehension of geometric terms. Students show difficulty in translating words into equations.* (Grade 8)

- *Students had difficulty with using protractor accurately , plotting graphs and completing charts.* (Grade 8)

- *Label, label, label! Numerical answers must be labeled! Stress titles... Plots, graphs, charts, tallies, diagrams, etc. must be titled so the reader knows what information is being given.* (Grade 8)

- *Make sure vocabulary used in an explanation correlates with vocabulary use of accompanying charts and/or graphs.* (Grade 8)

- *If a question requests an answer to the nearest tenth, that is absolutely required, even if it is a number such as 6.0; also, rounding to nearest whole.* (Grade 8)

- *Students need work interpreting charts and graphs.* (Grade 8)

SCIENCE

- *Students don't understand the concept of variables.* (NG)
- *Students need to avoid words like "stuff" and "things," in answers.* (NG)
- *Most children had trouble explaining the "control" element in a science experiment. Need help comparing similarities and differences between two experiments.* (NG)
- *Students did have trouble recording data accurately on the charts during the experiments.* (Grade 3)
- *Many students had trouble comparing their prediction to what actually happened. (Grade 3*
- *Need to become more familiar with scientific terminology.* (Grade 3)
- *Students in third grade seem to not know the difference between describe and explain in science. They need to support their predictions with details and observations from the experiment.* (Grade 3)
- *Strengths - recording data, improved logical reasoning. Weaknesses - specificity in answers, reading and interpreting charts, using data to support answers, following all of the directions, fractions (math), number sentence meaning.* (Grade 3)
- *Students have difficulty drawing conclusions about scientific data. Students come to conclusions but rarely use evidence to support them.* (Grade 5)
- *Don't forget complete labeling of any illustrations or charts. Many items are only partially labeled.* (Grade 5)
- *Students tend to give only one item to prove mathematical relationship in a pattern. Students do not seem to be familiar with the components of a table or chart, especially the title. Very few students label both axes or give the table/chart a title. when conducting investigations, more emphasis is needed on validity/reliability. Students need to know why it is important to compare data.* (Grade 5)
- *Students are not exposed to skills that would allow them to design a valid experiment with all parts of the scientific method. Students do not understand the basic scientific method. Students are not being able to interpret data from a chart or a graph. Students are not being able to construct the appropriate kind of graph for given data. (bar, line, or other).* (Grade 5)

- *Students need work on consistent use of metric measurement in reporting science results and on identifying details that support a prediction.* (Grade 5)

- *Many students had problems with vocabulary words such as "variables," "illustration," "validate," "experience," "elements."* (Grade 8)

- *Students need help expanding answers - giving proof for statements from experiments.* (Grade 8)

- *Students did not seem to know what an element is or a punnet square.* (Grade 8)

- *When a student is asked to predict or explain, tell the students to use factual data that is either given in the activity or that is background knowledge.* (Grade 8)

- *Students need to know how to identify variables in an experiment.* (Grade 8)

- *Students need work interpreting charts and graphs. Students need help understanding what a variable is when pertaining to science. Integrate with other content teachers to create tasks. Continue to have students read and write frequently.* (Grade 8)

Social Studies

- *Most students did very well with constructing a graph from given data. Most students did very poorly at identifying natural resources and capital resources. Most students did very poorly at identifying goods and services.* (NG)

- *Students had very definite opinions on the subject of fairness and equality and most were able to carry the idea over into a pertinent problem we face today in the area of human rights. For third graders, I thought they showed a lot of depth and understanding of current events as related to human rights issues.* (Grade 3)

- *Use map terms - North, East, South, West, etc. to identify locations. Children need to become familiar with American symbols and American holidays. Children need to understand the meaning of the word "original" and be able to draw original ideas.* (Grade 3)

- *Children have difficulty with the concepts of city, county, state, country and continents. We need to continue to teach directions, use of compass rose and locating places on a map. Many children do not know the definition of "climate."* (Grade 3)

- *Social Studies should stress a variety of directional locators.* (Grade 3)

- *Especially in Social Studies, children are not reading directions. Children do not know the difference between a city, state, or country.* (Grade 3)

- *In Social Studies, most students aren't able to answer on target. The task questions often assume a depth of prior knowledge or experiences that is not there.* (Grade 3)

- *The students have done very poorly on the Social Studies part of the third grade test.* (Grade 3)

- *The terms "features," "environment," "goods/services" need to be explained to students prior to "testing, as part of your curriculum for Social Studies. Students need to be able to answer multiple step questions."* (Grade 3)

- *Teachers need to review map skills and the word element. Students need to be taught how to follow 3-step directions.* (Grade 3)

- *Children are confused about natural, human, and capital resources.* (Grade 3)

- *Map skills/creating maps/application of map elements - needs work! Economic terms and concepts (e.g., resources/applications to a community) still pose difficulty to the majority of children graded.* (Grade 3)

- *Review - natural resource, capital resource, basic needs, wants, and products - and how they relate.* (Grade 3)

- *Introduce the idea of history as a continuous in a time line. Organize major events about U.S. and Maryland chronologically. Identifying different time periods. 1600's, 1700's, etc. and help students identify events that occurred in each period.* (Grade 5)

- *Students are also having problems in the area of geography. Many students don't know the difference between east and west or north and south. Many also seem to lack the knowledge of where Maryland is in the U.S. in relation to other states.* (Grade 5)

- *Students need to be able to locate information on a chart and generalize the information to answer questions.* (Grade 5)

- *Need work on distinguishing the differences between states and countries, ex. between Maryland and America.* (Grade 5)

- *Students are improving, but there are some areas that we need to continue to work on: (1) map skills and understanding a map key, (2) compare/ contrast skills, (3) working in groups, (4) reading an almanac, (5) knowledge of Maryland history, Civil War, Revolutionary War.* (Grade 5)

- *Students did well in areas relevant to them and their own culture, e.g., educational systems, regulations, comparing our lives and society to others. Other historical eras are difficult for them to relate to.* (Grade 5)

- *"Goods and services", "needs and wants" and "resources" are concepts with which many students had difficulty.* (Grade 5)

- *Work on extrapolation of data from a graph.* (Grade 8)

- *Students are deficient in the following areas: Geography - Knowing the map elements basic key/legend; know the difference between states and regions; knowing the difference between countries and continents; knowing the geographical features i.e., mountains, valleys.* (Grade 8)

- *Comparing different graphic information sources (charts, graphs, maps, etc) is hard for students! They need to have a fuller understanding of the democratic process.* (Grade 8)

- *They have no clue as to what "geographic factors" are.* (Grade 8)
- *Problems included not answering questions asked, not answering all parts of question; not sticking to facts (offering opinions on the issue instead of answers to questions); not being able to do three part questions.* (Grade 8)
- *One of the most glaring mistakes that students tended to make on the exam was being able to interpret map elements. I would encourage teachers to concentrate on activities that would allow students to draw, or diagram maps.* (Grade 8)
- *Need more work in understanding the basic concept of "culture."* (Grade 8)
- *Students seemed to do well on the questions where they were being asked to express their own ideas, as opposed to questions asking for more concrete and historical information. The graphic organizer proved effective. However, students are not always able to separate their feelings from the facts they are given.* (Grade 8)
- *Students also need to proofread their responses in Social Studies to catch obvious errors.* (Grade 8)
- *Students need to read the questions meticulously in order to discern what is being asked. Students perform well when asked to cite an opinion. They also liked to comment enthusiastically on whether our culture should adopt another culture's regulations.* (Grade 8)
- *Students need to learn the meaning of the arguments for and against various contemporary issues. Students need to learn the difference between cultures, and sub-cultures. Students do not understand there is a difference between Social Security and Federal and State taxes. Many believe the money collected from these are all used for the same thing - welfare, roads, parks and so on.* (Grade 8)
- *Students need to know how to take a question apart to make sure they answer each part. Students are not clear about a culture's past and present because time to them is so very much in the present. They tend to mix up facts. It is clear that a graphic organizer helps to sort out information and could be used more to help students remember better.* (Grade 8)
- *Children seem to have difficulty explaining fairness, right and wrong. Students must also be worldly and have a solid general knowledge base. Numerous tasks assume the students are aware of global ideas of fairness, rule-making, and fairly high level concepts, that great pockets of my students are not exposed to.* (Grade 8)

Actions

General

- *Practice reading (multi-step or complex) directions and paraphrasing them so that students more correctly interpret the directions.* (NG)
- *Work on carefully reading directions and pulling key words. Work on having extended answers. Practice giving at least two reasons.* (NG)
- *Make sure directions are clear and will generate the desired outcome. Stress proofreading all work before handing in to see if it says what writer wishes it to.* (NG)
- *As an aid for responding, ask pupils to underline (or highlight) key words or phrases in the directions. Then, ask them to check off what tasks they have completed.* (NG)
- *Tell children that when the prompt says "Give three examples" that does not necessarily mean only three sentences.* (NG)
- *Students should be encouraged to answer questions in complete sentences throughout the school year so that it is a natural response on the MSPAP.* (Grade 3)
- *Teach students to write extended sentences. Students should make it a rule that if they give an answer, they should have a reason why they gave the answer.* (Grade 3)
- *When students answer questions, encourage them to always answer the question "why?"* (Grade 3)
- *Teachers should try to familiarize their students with MSPAP vocabulary, i.e., "least likely" and "explain."* (Grade 3)
- *Encourage and push the use of models, dictionaries and peer helpers from an early age.* (Grade 3)
- *Build in more writing for science and social studies activities. Students need more written explanation of exactly why and how things occur.* (Grade 3)

- *Word walls, word lists are essential especially for hard high frequency words (i.e., probably, because). It would be helpful for students to spend time doing scoring on their own and other's writing (i.e., Writer's Workshop). Give them more opportunities to do experiments and activities and then writing about them.* (Grade 3)

- *Continue to have students write using data from a chart, record data, create charts. Encourage students to discuss their thinking and explain answers.* (Grade 3)

- *I'm going to collaborate with the science and social studies teachers to develop activities that have students writing predictions, comparisons, and conclusions.* (Grade 3)

- *I plan on introducing and stressing direction words such as "describe," "represent," "design," "create," "observe," "explain," "give characteristics," etc. I will also give students practice in answering questions independently, stressing completeness and teach them how to read a question and figure out exactly what is expected of them.* (Grade 3)

- *I will be more specific in my verbal and written instructions and requests, breaking task down into smaller parts. I will also try to present parts of the curriculum that lend themselves to the Maryland Learning Outcomes in a more practical yet stimulating manner.* (Grade 3)

- *I am making sure that I continue to do performance-based activities and tests.* (Grade 3)

- *I will work more with rubrics with my students. I plan to have students develop and use their own rubrics.* (Grade 3)

- *Students need to have experience completing multi-step tasks in which they must refer back and forth, using previous steps to complete new ones.* (Grade 3)

- *Experience using multiple charts or graphs to solve problems would also be helpful.* (Grade 3)

- *In the beginning of the school year go over directions orally. As the year progresses have students begin to read directions independently, circling key words and explaining what the directions mean.* (Grade 3)

- *I want to continue to develop and use multi-step activities in my classroom.* (Grade 3)

- *I plan to provide more independent work opportunities where students read directions/questions and respond with little or no teacher intervention.* (Grade 3)

- *I will also use more charts, tables, and graphs to have students record information in and interpret information from. Place an emphasis on students justifying their answers with information obtained from the data.* (Grade 3)

- *I plan to time activities so children get a feel for managing their own efforts.* (Grade 3)

- *Do more graph work. Practice the terms natural resource, capital resource, basic need, want product, explain, support. Reading and understanding directions. I think verbalizing what to do after reading complex directions would help.* (Grade 3)

- *I anticipate working on: (1) writing complete sentences. (2) including specific details from reading to support answers. (3) incorporating quotes into writing. (4) providing more experience with Maryland history and current events. (5) reading questions correctly and carefully.* (Grade 5)

- *I will get the students to read questions aloud and explain what the question is asking.* (Grade 5)

- *See that teachers in grades 1, 2, and 4 become more familiar with the MSPAP activities.* (Grade 5)

- *I will emphasize using the dictionary at all times no matter what subject area they are working on. I will stress proofreading and peer proofreading of all types of writings.* (Grade 5)

- *We need as teachers to not always rephrase directions for students, but make them read them for themselves, then do it from their understanding.* (Grade 5)

- *Students need to practice reading thoroughly. Many written questions that are thought-provoking can be used as warm-up activities for many subjects. Giving written directions to a hands-on project can detect some reading problems as well. Illustrations, graphs, charts, tables, can be incorporated into almost any subject. Students need to know and demonstrate the correct application of each visual reference, as well as written.* (Grade 5)

- *We will offer activities that allow students to respond on many levels of complexity so that the brightest and the slower students can both do their best in the same activity and be successful on some level.* (Grade 5)

- *I plan to write and score more performance-based activities this year. I also plan to keep portfolios and track students' progress on performance activities.* (Grade 5)

- *Performance tasks need to be used more for instruction. I plan to use a class "bulls eye" to develop students' understanding of the purpose and use of scoring rubrics. I am going to put more emphasis on my students writing for specific audiences.* (Grade 5)

- *Compare two readings on same topic, use main idea table weekly. Continue to refine questions so that students are constantly required to "thoughtfully apply" knowledge.* (Grade 5)

- *I plan to introduce more writing across the curriculum.* (Grade 5)

- *Attempt to instill in the teachers the need for students to respond to "activities" precisely, specifically, and relevantly. Stress the importance of "proofreading" written work to ensure that it makes sense and is legible. Emphasis on main idea/supporting details.* (Grade 5)

- *My focus for this year will be thinking skills which allow the students to use a myriad of tasks similar to those formatted in MSPAP test booklets to hone and fine-tune these skills.* (Grade 5)

- *I plan to become very explicit in giving directions and accepting only work that accurately followed these directions; have students correct answers until they match the objective of the activity (REDO - REDO - REDO); use charts across curriculum areas; teach skill of generalizing information.* (Grade 5)

- *Encourage students to consult a dictionary when they cannot define a word using the context.* (Grade 5)

- *When students write explanations, I will be sure they give multiple examples or illustrations and extend their ideas.* (Grade 5)

- *I will renew and increase my interest and efforts in cross-content integration of lessons, activities and assessment.* (Grade 8)

- *Students in middle school need to begin to have accountability for their work. They need to read directions carefully. Based on these problems alone, I see myself ceasing my practice of reiterating directions so that students allow themselves to grasp this concept themselves. I see myself implementing more journal writing and writings which lend themselves to adding as many details as possible.* (Grade 8)

- *Make sure students are required to write more essays which force them to take a stand and support it with details.* (Grade 8)

- *I plan to incorporate social studies, reading and math skills into my science curriculum.* (Grade 8)

- *Re-emphasize the desireability of incorporating the question in one's answer!* (Grade 8)

- *My students will draw conclusions, make inferences, formulate hypotheses, and create diagrams, maps, and charts using statistical data.* (Grade 8)

- *I plan to introduce and use cooperative learning, peer tutoring and group activities on a regular basis.* (Grade 8)

- *Highlighting, underlining, etc., skills could be emphasized in the classroom to help students focus in on and hit all of the points in the question.* (Grade 8)

- *I plan to include activities in various areas of curriculum where students read and interpret tables and then develop tables of their own to express information.* (Grade 8)

READING

- *The more kids read, and are read to, the better writers they will be.* (Grade 3)
- *I will encourage the children to answer reading comprehension questions by giving more than one fact or piece of supporting information whenever possible and appropriate.* (Grade 3)
- *I plan to encourage activities which include reading directions independently to complete activities in all areas. I will provide opportunities for students to practice rereading and referring to the text when completing a task.* (Grade 3)
- *Students need more/earlier exposure to poems. More read-aloud-whole group/same grade, student/student.* (Grade 5)
- *Focus on cause and effect in novels and short stories - using a table to organize.* (Grade 5)
- *During reading activities, students will answer higher level questions and create their own higher level questions (i.e., involving evaluating, analyzing, synthesizing). Questions will give them the opportunity to engage in all reading stances: global understanding, developing interpretation, personal response, and critical stance.* (Grade 8)
- *I will emphasize using details from the reading to support a response. Have the student find a quotation in an article which emphasizes the author's message.* (Grade 8)

WRITING/LANGUAGE IN USE

- *Stress proofreading all work before handing in to see if it says what writer wishes it to.* (NG)
- *I will involve my students with more writing exercises that involve explaining and describing.* (Grade 3)
- *I will focus more on teaching my students to be able to write in a concise manner.* (Grade 3)
- *My students need to understand how to write clearly so that their audience understands what they are trying to express.* (Grade 3)
- *I see that I really need to focus on teaching my students how to write complete sentences!* (Grade 3)
- *Give students a checklist for proofreading so they know what to look for when editing. Use this checklist throughout the school year.* (Grade 3)
- *As a "K" teacher I will be even more aware of students' oral skills because that will hopefully lead to better writing skills.* (Grade 3)
- *Students will have opportunities to score samples of their own and their peer's writing (0-2 score) with discussion of how "0" or "1" papers can be revised/edited to attain a higher score.* (Grade 3)
- *I intend to make writing a more integral part of my students' music class, and I plan on creating tasks and procedures that will help the students to take writing in <u>every</u> subject more seriously.* (Grade 3)
- *Students should write about everything - people, problems, plays, programs, pets, places, experiences.* (Grade 3)
- *"Polishing the piece" needs to be emphasized.* (Grade 3)
- *I plan to work more on using descriptive words when describing two or more items (comparing and contrast also).* (Grade 3)
- *I'll put more emphasis on writing adequate explanations for the conclusions they have drawn.* (Grade 3)
- *I incorporated the generic reading rubric into my lessons last year and hope to use the writing and language in use rubrics this year to improve my students' writing.* (Grade 5)

- *Have students write letters, to build comfort and enjoyment in writing.* (Grade 5)

- *I plan to use icons in my daily instruction. I want my students to know how their writing responses are being evaluated. They should be aware of when I am looking for language usage or writing ability as well as content knowledge.* (Grade 5)

- *I will encourage students to write out answers more clearly - sentence form, not one-word answers.* (Grade 5)

- *Have students practice writing paragraphs to inform.* (Grade 8)

- *Students need to work on developing ideas instead of naming them without expansion. I plan on teaching how to incorporate information so that when writing to inform students do not plagiarize.* (Grade 8)

- *I see myself implementing more journal writing and writings which lend themselves to adding as many details as possible. In the MSPAP, it is important for students to realize that sufficiency of writing and detail is a must.* (Grade 8)

- *I will emphasize writing skills and proofreading even in math, science classes.* (Grade 8)

MATHEMATICS

- *I plan to work on thinking skills (games, puzzles, and so forth).* (NG)
- *I plan on incorporating more written tasks in math in substitution for fact drill types of activities.* (NG)
- *I plan to highlight key words like "most likely" and "estimate" and explain as students work independently.* (Grade 3)
- *I will continue working on graph skills, including interpretation of survey data.* (Grade 3)
- *I will have students use scientific and mathematical terminology regularly.* (Grade 3)
- *I will use math logs to allow students to document their math findings.* (Grade 3)
- *When adding or multiplying money amounts, we'll work on writing out to two decimal places 'cause the calculator leaves off the zeros. i.e., $2.50 x 3 = 7.5 = $7.50. I'll explain patterns in written words, i.e., smile, star, smile, star, smile. I'll work with students on solving multiple step/multiple part word problems.* (Grade 3)
- *To help with writing number sentences, say "talk to me in math"— now write to me in math using words and numbers.* (Grade 3)
- *(1) After students complete a task or question, I will encourage my students to explain their answers in complete thoughts. (2) I will begin to insist that students refer back to data when they respond to a question. (3) I will also continue to focus on direction reading skills. Emphasis will be on numerical data, (i.e., "choose one from each column) directional vocabulary, (i.e., "construct", "to represent") and on multi-step directions.* (Grade 3)
- *Use a lot of open-ended questions with several "right" answers - but requiring logical reasoning behind answers. Practice reading and making graphs - with detailed titles and labels.* (Grade 5)
- *Pay more attention to dollar signs, decimals points, addition and REMAINDERS, and rounding off. Students still panic when it "doesn't come out even," they feel it has to be wrong if there is a remainder.* (Grade 5)
- *More emphasis on checking calculations, the position of decimals and the position of commas.* (Grade 5)

- *Students will write number sentences and equations using N more often.* (Grade 5)
- *Students need to practice use square root key on the calculators!* (Grade 8)
- *I will also stress which type of graph is appropriate for the given data set.* (Grade 8)
- *Have students graph data using a checklist of what all graphs should have.* (Grade 8)
- *Practice writing, rewriting, and solving equations. Practice writing and substituting values in formulas. Being precise in measurements and connecting points.* (Grade 8)

SCIENCE

- *I plan to do more hands on experiments.* (Grade 3)
- *I plan to have students make predictions and compare what actually happened to their prediction.* (Grade 3)
- *Have students use scientific and mathematical terminology regularly.* (Grade 3)
- *My students will learn to relate models to physical phenomenon.* (Grade 3)
- *(1) After students complete a task or question, I will encourage my students to explain their answers in complete thoughts. (2) I will begin to insist that students refer back to data when they respond to a question. (3) I will also continue to focus on direction-reading skills. (4) Emphasis will be on numerical data, (i.e., "choose one from each column) directional vocabulary, (i.e., "construct", "to represent") and on multi-step directions.* (Grade 3)
- *I will continue "hands-on" experiments, cooperative learning groups in every subject, and to ask my students to explain what's been done.* (Grade 5)
- *I will have my students perform more experiments that model "real life" situations and having them explain how it models the situation. Having students identify independent and dependent variables whenever possible.* (Grade 8)
- *Create charts in science; have students not just fill in the blanks but actually create their own charts or tables.!!* (Grade 8)

Social Studies

- *I will teach my students to identify goods and services and capital and human resources.* (Grade 3)
- *We will work on the ability to identify various places on a map by using directional words.* (Grade 3)
- *I will have the students identify advantages and disadvantages in various situations.* (Grade 3)
- *I'll teach that symbols have different meanings.* (Grade 3)
- *Even though I teach music, I will incorporate geography (city, states, countries) into more of my music lessons.* (Grade 3)
- *I'll give more emphasis to multiple step questions. Students must explain themselves in concise and precise terms.* (Grade 3)
- *I'll stress clear, specific answers.* (Grade 3)
- *Map activities/creating maps will be tied in with literature.* (Grade 3)
- *I will present lessons on economics that relate to students' everyday world. (Grade*
- *I will continue to stress geography in all subjects, not just Social Studies.* (Grade 5)
- *I will stress journals and open-ended test questions for Social Studies.* (Grade 5)
- *I suggest teaching students geography by reading true-to-life stories to them about life in other places. This may help them relate to tasks requiring experience other than that which has been their own. Examples may include city, country, sea/ocean towns, and northern, southern, western, and eastern regions of the U.S.A. and of the world.* (Grade 5)
- *I have made a huge banner for my classroom listing the social sciences. From the test it is obvious that students need to know the different disciplines and what they cover.* (Grade 8)
- *I will emphasize how geographical factors effect people's lives.* (Grade 8)
- *I plan to recommend to social studies teachers to stress developing "the social studies" concept and developing concept of culture.* (Grade 8)

- *I will encourage more work in groups and individually on problem solving and critical thinking, emphasizing higher levels of thinking and analyzing the processes themselves.* (Grade 8)

- *I intend to emphasize more cultural comparisons, especially during current events discussions.* (Grade 8)